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DEPARTMENT PLEASE PASS TO NSC FOR ADAM STERLING

E.O. 12958: DECL: 01/11/2012
TAGS: [MARR](#) [MOPS](#) [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [IZ](#)
SUBJECT: INITIAL GOH REACTION TO PRESIDENT'S POLICY ADDRESS
ON IRAQ

REF: STATE 3592

Classified By: POL/C ERIC V. GAUDIOSI; REASONS 1.4 (B) AND (D)

¶1. (SBU) Ambassador Foley reviewed the essential elements of the President's January 10 announcement on Iraq policy with MFA State Secretary Laszlo Varkonyi January 11 per reftel, emphasizing our support for the Iraqi government's actions to promote stability, bolster the economy, and achieve national reconciliation, our intention to channel support to moderate elements, and our commitment to regional diplomacy. She underscored that an unstable Iraq serving as a safehaven for terrorists is contrary to the interests of the entire international community: we are providing material and military resources to clear, hold, and build in order to let Iraq's young democracy progress but will not make an indefinite commitment.

¶2. (C) Varkonyi expressed the GoH's appreciation for our update, highlighting Hungary's contribution to the NATO Training Mission in Iraq (NTM-I) and noting that Budapest continues to closely monitor events in Iraq. He expressed his impression that "ordinary Iraqis" want to live in peace, and look to their own government to take action against all extremist elements. He concluded that the "adjustments" in US policy were appropriate to address "the same challenges."

¶3. (C) Varkonyi also raised two related issues:

Re Saddam Hussein's execution, he noted that the GoH's statement had referred to its own principled objections to capital punishment but also recognized that "justice must be done in order to move forward." He emphasized that the Iraqi government's actions were "taken under Iraqi law and ultimately unavoidable."

Re Defense Minister Szekeres' upcoming visit to Hungarian soldiers attached to NTM-I, he explained that the party would have to RON in Damascus en route for logistical reasons. He wanted us to be aware of the stop in Damascus, and to know that the GoH has recommended that the Defense Minister not pursue meetings with Syrian government officials. "If they insist," he concluded, "the conversation will revolve around the weather." (Note: we have also briefed Defense Minister Szekeres' staff per reftel in preparation for his trip. End Note.)

¶4. (U) We will continue to discuss the New Way Forward with other GoH officials and report as appropriate.
FOLEY